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MEET THE PRESS

America's Press Conference of the Air

Produced by LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK

Guest: WILLIAM ATTWOOD
Editor in Chief, Cowles Communications, Inc., and
former United States Ambassador to Guinea and
Kenya

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Panel:

JAMES J. KILPATRICK, *Washington Star Syndicate*
BRUCE W. NELAN, *Time Magazine*
RAY SCHERER, *NBC News*
LAWRENCE E. SPIVAK, *Permanent Panel Member*

Moderator:

WILLIAM MONROE, *NBC News*

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M E E T T H E P R E S S

MR. MONROE: Our guest today on MEET THE PRESS is William Attwood, Editor in Chief of Cowles Communications and Look Magazine. Mr. Attwood served as the U.S. Ambassador to Guinea under President Kennedy and as Ambassador to Kenya for President Johnson. He resigned last year to return to journalism. His new book "The Reds and the Blacks" deals with his experiences in Africa and with the State Department.

Because of the AFTRA strike, Ambassador Sol M. Linowitz, who was announced as our guest today, could not be with us.

We will have the first questions now for Mr. Attwood from Lawrence E. Spivak, Permanent Member of the MEET THE PRESS Panel.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Attwood, a recent story in the Washington Star says, "All African states are ripe for revolution." Do you agree with that?

MR. ATTWOOD: This depends upon what their leadership is like. Leaders in Africa who are corrupt or tyrannical or both, and neglect the interest of their people I think are going to have a hard time of it. There have been ten coups in Africa in the last two years. Most of these have been by people who were trying to get things done, and people like Nkrumah and Ben Bella have been deposed. I think on the whole these coups aren't bad.

MR. SPIVAK: Do you think that many other African states though are ready for revolution?

MR. ATTWOOD: I think there are a few. I wouldn't want to single them out right now, but I think there are a few where the people, where the younger element, where Army officers, people who are the doers rather than the talkers, will be taking over.

MR. SPIVAK: I would like to go to our own policy on Africa. According to a report, the U.S. is searching for a new formula or a new policy on Africa. Do you think we need a new African policy?

MR. ATTWOOD: I think we have had a pretty good one for the last four years. It has worked. The only thing wrong with it is that we have not had the resources to implement it. Our aid program in Africa has been whittled down over the years, but the direction of our policy both under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson has been very sound. It is to reinforce their independence and speed their economic development, and we are not against non-alignment. I think we have gotten acquainted with the Africans, and I think they understand us.

MR. SPIVAK: Are you saying then that the policy we now have is one that you approve of completely, that you wouldn't make any changes at all in it?

MR. ATTWOOD: Changes in emphasis, perhaps. I think we should be a little tougher with the Portuguese and the South Africans, perhaps, but we should concentrate on economic development in these countries. As I say, our main problem is that we didn't have the resources. Congress just didn't vote enough funds to USAID, AID and other things to enable us to do what needs to be done in these countries.

MR. SPIVAK: President Johnson has asked Congress this year, I think, for \$195 million for aid to Africa, that is, the next fiscal year. What kind of a job do you think can be done with that money if Congress gives it to him?

MR. ATTWOOD: Not enough. I mean that is less than half the cost of one nuclear aircraft carrier. We are spending \$25 billion in Vietnam. Less than \$200 million for 38 countries isn't very impressive, particularly in education and agriculture. These are the great needs. Of course the Peace Corps has been very effective there, but we need more than that.

I think in the long run of course private capital has got to do the job. Government can guarantee the investment, but I think private capital is where the big money should come from.

MR. SPIVAK: You say you are satisfied with our present policy in Africa, and yet on the flap of your book you write, "We must dismantle the Agency for International Development,"

that is AID, "if we are to save and strengthen our vitally important foreign assistance program." Will you tell us why you believe that?

MR. ATTWOOD: That sounds like a paradox. I am not just talking about Africa. I think the AID bureaucracy has gotten so big and so cumbersome, due in part to the fact that Congress insists on hamstringing them and hobbling them with red tape, that it is very hard for the American people who elect Congressmen to understand what it is all about. They see this money going to AID, but they don't see the results. They don't see where the schools are being built and the roads—the Americans are compassionate people; they are not against helping people in need. But AID has just become suspect. I think for this reason we have to have a whole new approach to the aid business.

MR. SPIVAK: This is a fundamental change in policy, isn't it?

MR. ATTWOOD: I think it is going to come—yes, I suppose it is. I would like to see more of our aid dispensed through our Ambassadors. I think our Ambassadors should be trusted to use this money wisely. I think it should be confined in places like Africa to education, agriculture, roads, communications. Things that don't cost much money but that mean an awful lot in these countries, particularly technical training. Then, when you have political stability, when you have the kids in school, then encourage private capital to come in and do the bigger jobs. I mean the World Bank, the other nations. I look forward to the day when the Russians as a developed country will be cooperating with us in Africa.

MR. SPIVAK: You would allow our Ambassadors in every country to distribute the aid and decide who was to get what?

MR. ATTWOOD: They would have certain conditions, certain criteria they would have to meet, and then they would have a deputy, say, for economic assistance on their staff, and once they had a request they agreed was a useful one, they could then go back to Washington, and assuming it was feasible, they could spend the money. It would save an awful lot of paper work.

In Guinea we once had to explain to the people there just how our aid worked. The Minister there said, "We used to be suspicious of Americans, what you are up to in Africa, but after seeing how tied up you are in red tape, no country that is this complicated could really have any designs on us."

There were 38 different steps that had to be taken between the request for, say, a generator, and the delivery of that generator.

* * *
(announcements)

MR. NELAN: Mr. Attwood, according to the Institute for Strategic Studies, 20 non-African nations are supplying arms and military training to 33 African nations. Do you think the Africans can make real economic progress when they are wasting so much effort on weaponry?

MR. ATTWOOD: I think it is a waste, and I am glad that our policy has been to discourage this. I think we only have—we do have a military aid program in Ethiopia, a substantial one, but generally we discourage this, and we do not get into the military hardware business in Africa because it is a waste.

MR. NELAN: You said in your book that you thought that the Eisenhower Administration was wrong in supporting what you call tin pot dictators. Do you think that these ten coups you mentioned might have produced some tin pot dictators, or tin horn dictators, and do you think we should support them?

MR. ATTWOOD: On the contrary I think in many cases these coups have overthrown dictators, such as Nkrumah and Ben Bella, and in Dahomey and in the Central African Republic. Some haven't, but in many cases these palace revolutions have brought in much more practical pragmatic people to power.

MR. NELAN: You said in Kenya once that the Africans need us more than we need them.

Did this reflect your feeling that we perhaps do not have really vital national interests in Africa?

MR. ATTWOOD: I think we have a whole series of interests. For one thing it is potentially a very rich continent. They produce about 95 percent of the world's industrial minerals. Eventually they are going to be customers, if you want to think in terms of the future, in foreign trade, but also—and they have 38—39 votes in the UN. If you have ever been to a political convention, you know anyone who has a third of the votes is somebody to be reckoned with—if you are interested in the UN. But more than that I think this whole continent is a test case of whether we, the rich countries of the world, can close the gap between the rich and the poor. In Africa we have a much cleaner slate than in other places. I mean there is more chance—you say, who shall we support. I think we should support those countries who are serious about economic development and who aren't involved in foreign adventures and meddling in other people's business, but who really want to improve the standard of living of their own people. They should be helped.

MR. KILPATRICK: Mr. Attwood, the UN sanctions were imposed upon Rhodesia on the charge that Rhodesia was a threat

to international peace and security. Out of your long background in Africa, what evidence do you see to support that charge?

MR. ATTWOOD: I never got down to Salisbury or Rhodesia. I think in the long run any African country with a white minority rule is a potential tinderbox because the Africans are not going to put up with it forever. So for that reason I would say until Rhodesia sort of adjusts to the future, the way Kenya and Tanzania did and other places where there were resident whites, there is a potential for violence there.

MR. KILPATRICK: Is it your impression these sanctions will succeed in bringing down the Ian Smith regime?

MR. ATTWOOD: No, I don't think sanctions have really worked anywhere.

They haven't even worked in Cuba.

MR. KILPATRICK: Yesterday the State Department issued a statement reiterating its support of the sanctions, and the Assistant Secretary said that he saw no need at this moment for additional sanctions.

Mr. Attwood, suppose these sanctions do fail, what would be the next step in your judgment, out of your backround at the UN and in Africa?

MR. ATTWOOD: I think more persuasion, more give and take, more dialogue between the whites and the blacks. You see when Ian Smith declared independence unilaterally, a lot of whites in Kenya who had become Kenyan citizens, who had lived and prospered under African rule tried to get down there and try to tell their old friends that it wasn't the end of the world if you had majority rule, but they couldn't even get in. They were isolating and insulating themselves from reality in these countries. I think if you can get a dialogue going, that is going to be very useful.

MR. KILPATRICK: Would you like to see the United States offer its good offices between Rhodesia and Great Britain to try to settle it?

MR. ATTWOOD: We are involved in so many places, I think, that—let's not take on any more trouble unless the British and the Africans really want us to. Let's not volunteer.

MR. KILPATRICK: Does it seem to you that these ten coups you mentioned, plus two or three others that you said might occur, present any greater threat to international peace and security than the situation in Rhodesia?

MR. ATTWOOD: These coups, you know, are very bloodless. Nobody is getting hurt. Certain people sort of move into the palace and other people move out. There hasn't been much bloodshed in Africa.

MR. SCHERER: One of the major themes of your book is the push that the Russians and the Chinese have made in Africa. You say the Russians have over-played their hand. What do you mean by that?

MR. ATTWOOD: They tried too hard. They were making a mistake which some of our people were making fifteen years ago. We have been in the aid business a lot longer than the Russians in the under-developed countries, and there was a time when we thought we could buy friends by giving them what they wanted. Of course, that doesn't work. You don't even rent friends. But the Russians thought they could go in there and—maybe they had been reading the old missionary accounts of winning over the natives with baubles and trinkets, and also they were trying to impose their own ideology on these people and make good Communists out of them, and the Africans resented it. In other words, the hard sell combined with an under-estimation of the African sophistication. I think, has hurt them. As a result, I think the Russians are getting a little tired of Africa, and they are pulling back.

MR. SCHERER: Have they learned, are they now using a softer sell, are they doing better, now?

MR. ATTWOOD: They are much more hard-nosed about their aid. In Guinea they were handing it out right and left, but the only result after two years was their Ambassador was expelled.

In Kenya on the other hand they have been much more business-like about the aid—how will it be used and what do we get back and what is the repayment. They are acting more the way we do, now.

MR. SCHERER: What about the Mainland Chinese; has the rivalry between China and Russia hurt their inroads in Africa?

MR. ATTWOOD: Oh, sure, because they are very helpful to us in that the Russians accuse the Chinese and the Chinese accuse the Russian of things which we have already mentioned in the *USIA* and *VOA*. But I think largely the Russians are still active because the Chinese are there, and they would not like to see the Chinese take over the ideological leadership of these southern African nationalist groups.

MR. SCHERER: Would it be your view that the Russians and the Chinese are no longer a threat in Africa?

MR. ATTWOOD: If Africa sinks into chaos and despair and people become really desperate or hungry and they can see no signs of progress, they could turn to them to what you might call a very radical Chinese solution, and there are people who have been trained in China and Russia who are ready to take over. I think in many of these countries—you know, they take thousands of students back to the Eastern Bloc every year. About ninety percent of them come back disenchanting with communism, but the other ten percent are usually well indoctrinated, and they are there in case of trouble.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Attwood, there are many people who believe that the white man's roll in Africa is either finished or soon will be finished. Do you think that there is a growth of a reverse racism, there?

MR. ATTWOOD: I just bought fifty acres of land in Kenya, and I fully expect to spend my twilight years warming my bones there, so this is one way of saying that I have confidence in the future of Africa and certainly in the future of the white man if he adjusts to black rule.

You know, white technicians, white advisors, are needed in Africa, farm managers, the Peace Corps, teachers and others, and if they accept the fact that they have no special privileges—if they are not racists, they are very welcome, certainly in some parts of Africa. I can't speak for the whole continent.

Actually in Kenya the white population went down drastically, I think from 55 to 40 thousand, right after independence—just before—and in '65 the curve was going up again. More whites were coming in than were going out.

MR. SPIVAK: No interview is complete without at least one question on Viet Nam.

Our friends and allies in Europe are deeply disturbed by our involvement in Viet Nam. How did you find the situation in Africa?

MR. ATTWOOD: Do you mean how they felt about Viet Nam?

MR. SPIVAK: Yes.

MR. ATTWOOD: Well, it is far away. It is not very relevant to their problems except that they know that we are spending all this money there, and this is money which might be used for economic development in Africa, so I think they would love to see this war come to an end. Plus the fact they don't quite understand why we are so far from home and fighting in this distant jungle. However, they don't—they are isolationists in a sense, they are Africa-firsters, and they are not too concerned really, the leaders, with what goes on in the rest of the world.

During the 1965 peace offensive, Soapy Williams came over, and he talked to a lot of Africans, and the question was, "Well, are you willing to stop the fighting if the other side will stop?" We said, "Well, we are willing to talk any time."

That made sense to the Africans.

MR. SPIVAK: Is there support in Africa for our position there, at all?

MR. ATTWOOD: There is understanding. I think there is more understanding among the Africans than there is, I think, in Europe.

MR. NELAN: Mr. Attwood, if I may turn to one of your other writings, you wrote this week in Look that you wished the muck-rakers would stop writing about the CIA because enough damage has been done already. Did you mean to imply that the CIA is not a legitimate area of inquiry for the American press?

MR. ATTWOOD: Well, sure—I didn't mean to say or imply that I was against Rampart's exposing the CIA's funding. What I was trying to say, I guess, is that they would be much more convincing if they had exposed—if this exposé had been in context. If they had done an exposé of all intelligence services in the world and what everybody is up to. Then their criticism of the CIA would be more valid. You might say it is like a historian of the future, say, writing about World War II and violently criticizing American air raids on Tokyo and Germany without ever mentioning that the Japanese attacked us at Pearl Harbor or that the Germans declared war on us. You know this kind of criticism would be out of context. You know we didn't start the cold war, and we were not the aggressors in Pearl Harbor or in Korea or in Vietnam. The way these things are written, you'd think that we were the only villains in the game. We are not.

MR. NELAN: You were complimentary to the CIA in your book. Were you always confident that you knew and approved of what the Agency was doing in the countries where you were Ambassador?

MR. ATTWOOD: They weren't particularly active where I was. I got to know the Agency people as every Ambassador does. You get to know something about their work, and you realize that most of their people are tweedy, pipe-smoking professors, who are laboring over documents and books over there in the grottos of McLean and are not Gung Ho James Bond types. I had quite a lot of respect for them. I think they are much maligned because they can't defend themselves when they make a mistake, and they can't brag about their successes. I feel a little sorry for them.

To answer your question, since the Bay of Pigs, or shortly after the Bay of Pigs fiasco, Kennedy did write a letter establishing the authority of the Ambassador as head of the country team, which means that the CIA is not off on a tangent of its own, that you are pretty well aware of—that what they are doing conforms to our general policy.

MR. KILPATRICK: Mr. Attwood, the kind words you had to say about the CIA were in sharp contrast to what you wrote about the State Department. You said the State Department is saddled with "a bureaucratic system that it smothers its people under an avalanche of paper, discourages their initiative and imagination and offers little but a nomadic, penny-pinching existence to young men thinking of diplomacy as a career."

How would you go about correcting these problems if you were Secretary of State?

MR. ATTWOOD: The first thing I would do is hire myself a deputy to take some of the work load off me. The Secretary is so overburdened with substantive work that it is awfully hard for him to spend full time on reforming the procedures of the Department. I think our Under Secretary Katzenbach is tackling this problem. I think many people are aware of it. Again, I was critical of the State Department, but I am also a loyal alumnus. I think the men and women who work there are very impressive. You have to be very dedicated to work for your government, given the pay scales and other frustrations. But I think that the paper work, the promotion system, other things I criticized, are finally getting some attention, not because of anything I wrote, but because enough people have come in, as we have, and have gone out—new people like Katzenbach, Gene Rostow, who realize something has to be done.

MR. KILPATRICK: You have communicated your criticisms then directly to the White House—of the State Department bureaucracy?

MR. ATTWOOD: I have talked to—over the last few years, whenever I have been in the White House, I have mentioned this to various people, and they are aware of it too. Kennedy was especially frustrated by the inability of the State Department to come up with fast answers to things.

MR. MONROE: We have about three minutes. Mr. Scherer.

MR. SCHERER: Along that same line, there is perhaps an even more basic question: How do we get Foreign Service Officers who don't practice the overriding habit of caution; how do we make them more enterprising, more adventurous?

MR. ATTWOOD: One of the problems is that a lot of our senior officers went through the McCarthy period, and the effects of that period are still evident. You know they were singled and burnt and prosecuted, you might say, and they developed, many of them, a habit of not sticking their neck out and not taking a chance. You know when you get to be a certain age and you need a promotion to put your kids through college, it is better to play it safe. This is one of the problems.

MR. SCHERER: A question about Guinea: Aren't our relations with Guinea deteriorating a little? They have asked the Peace Corps to leave—other facets of it. What do you say about that?

MR. ATTWOOD: They did that mainly because they were mad about the fact that they thought we had kidnapped their foreign minister, or that Pan America had. It was one of these impulsive things. Actually the American aluminum companies are now developing Guinea's bauxite reserves along with the Guineans. I don't think it is all that bad. What appears in the papers is not always what is really happening.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Attwood, from your experiences as a journalist and as a diplomat, why do you think President Johnson has been taking such a beating in the world press for his foreign policy?

MR. ATTWOOD: I find it hard to understand. I guess perhaps he doesn't have the manner or the style of his predecessor.

I am one of these people who don't think the New Frontier died with Kennedy, I think President Johnson has carried on—it is a question of personality, I suppose. I can't explain it. But if you look at the record, it's pretty good.

MR. SPIVAK: In your book you say, however, "Having Jack Kennedy in the White House made the job of every Ambassador easier."

Was your job affected in any significant way when President Johnson came in?

MR. ATTWOOD: Only because President Kennedy was so widely known. He had seen a lot of these leaders, particularly Africans. They had met him in the White House, they were impressed by him, they figured he understood their problems and could talk to them in their own terms, and he was a contemporary. They didn't know President Johnson. That was the real problem, even though he was the only President we have had who has ever set foot in Africa. Gradually his stand on civil rights, though, made him sort of come to life to a lot of these Africans.

MR. MONROE: We have about forty seconds.

MR. NELAN: Mr. Attwood, you negotiated some pretty unpromising situations in Africa. From that experience, can you see any room for compromise between the U. S. and the Communists in Viet Nam?

MR. ATTWOOD: This is a real tough one. I don't think that in the thirty seconds left—I'd better not even start on that one in thirty seconds.

MR. NELAN: How much foreign aid do you think we ought to be giving?

MR. ATTWOOD: Where?

MR. NELAN: In the world. The budget, you say, is too low.

MR. ATTWOOD: I think we are down to one-third of one percent of our GNP, and it seems to me we should go back to where we were in the Marshall Plan days. The needs are much greater.

MR. NELAN: About one percent?

MR. ATTWOOD: Maybe more.

MR. MONROE: Our time is up. I don't think we have time for another question.

Thank you very much Mr. Attwood, for being with us today on MEET THE PRESS.

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